

WASHINGTON – The U.S. House of Representatives today passed a resolution authored by U.S. Reps. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) and Rob Andrews (D-N.J.) by a vote of 418-1 calling on Iran to release two imprisoned union leaders and expressing America's solidarity with the Iranian people to bring them political freedom. Kirk and Andrews serve as co-chairs of the bipartisan House Iran Working Group.

In the late spring and early summer, Iranian agents arrested and imprisoned Mahmoud Salehi, founder of the Saghez Bakery Workers Association, and Mansour Osanloo, President of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs. Both remain in prison without access to medical or legal assistance. Salehi and Osanloo represent the independent labor movement of Iran, a major threat to a regime which prohibits the formation of independent unions.

"This bipartisan resolution reaffirms America's solidarity with Iranian workers in their effort to bring political freedom and individual liberty to Iran," said Rep. Mark Kirk. "We must send a message that we do not stand against the Iranian people—only their oppressive dictatorship."

"As a nation that values fair labor standards, it is critical for the government of Iran to know the United States condemns such intimidation of labor leaders," said Rep. Robert E. Andrews. "I commend the House leadership for addressing this important issue."

In August, the International Trade Union Confederation, together with the International Transport Workers' Federation, staged an international day of action to free the union leaders.

In a letter to Congress dated October 1, 2007, Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa applauded the resolution for its support of independent union movements in Iran.

"This Resolution reaffirms our solidarity with Iranian workers in their effort to bring political freedom and individual liberty to Iran," Hoffa wrote. "Please support H.Con.Res.203 so that we can send a strong message to Iran to release our union brothers immediately."

A copy of the resolution is below.

110th CONGRESS

1st Session

H. CON. RES. 203

Condemning the persecution of labor rights advocates in Iran.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

September 5, 2007

**Mr. KIRK (for himself and Mr. ANDREWS) submitted the following concurrent resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs**

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Condemning the persecution of labor rights advocates in Iran.

Whereas, on April 9, 2007, Iranian agents arrested and imprisoned Mahmoud Salehi, founder of the Saghez Bakery Workers Association;

Whereas Salehi's life is in grave danger as he sits in the Sanandaj prisons without access to kidney dialysis treatment;

Whereas, on July 10, 2007, plainclothes Iranian agents severely beat and arrested Mansour Osanloo, president of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs (Vahed);

Whereas Osanloo now sits in Iran's notorious Evin prison with a chronic heart condition and a serious eye condition that requires immediate surgery;

Whereas Osanloo has no access to medical or legal assistance and no contact with his family;

Whereas, on August 9, 2007, Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa called on Iran to immediately release Osanloo and Salehi;

Whereas, on August 9, 2007, the International Trade Union Confederation, together with the International Transport Workers' Federation, staged an international day of action to free Osanloo and Salehi;

Whereas Iran is a member of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and is legally bound to respect ILO core principles, including freedom of association;

Whereas Freedom House reported in 2006 that 'Iranian law does not allow independent labor unions to exist'; and

Whereas the United States remains the leading voice in the world for international workers' rights and labor standards: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress--

(1) condemns the Government of Iran for the arrest and imprisonment of Iranian union leaders Mahmoud Salehi and Mansour Osanloo and demands their immediate release; and

(2) expresses its solidarity with the workers of Iran and stands with them in their effort to bring political freedom and individual liberty to Iran.